LETTERS

THE MANY FACES OF ALCOHOLISM
(July/August)

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Rosemary Eymann
Bismarck, ND

A very common misconception, and one that kept me from the healing benefits of Al-Anon for years, is that heavy drinkers are not necessarily alcoholics. According to information published occasionally by columnists Ann and Abby, the alcoholic cannot hold a job and falls apart in a relatively short time. On page 189 of the July/August *Catholic World* is the statement: "Many people drink too much and, while this may hurt their careers or their family lives, they are not doing permanent physical damage to themselves."

This statement seems to say that the heavy drinker who hurts his family is not an alcoholic. The fact is, heavy drinking over a period of many years will eventually harm the body *permanently*. Here you disregard the psychological addiction to alcohol or any other addictive substance or behavior. My husband has been drinking heavily and regularly for over thirty-five years. His current drinking habit costs an average of $600 a month, yet he works six days a week and gets drunk regularly every afternoon and drinks until bedtime, whenever that is, seven days a week. He gets extremely angry when anyone dares suggest that he is an alcoholic. After all, although loaded with alcohol and driving every afternoon for all these years, he has never had an accident. He hasn't lost his job. He gets himself to bed every night. But he calls me and the children a lot of ugly names and screams and yells at us for not being perfect. He never has the time, nor the ability, to talk to his children. I could go on and on about life with a "heavy drinker."

Devoting an entire issue to the problem of alcoholism was a great idea and I found most of the articles to be excellent. But people need to know that heavy drinkers are already alcoholics—not future alcoholics—and that Al-Anon will certainly help them to deal with those persons.

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Pensacola, FL

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Rev. John B. Pesce
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INDEX

VOL.232 Jan.-Dec. 1989

Articles

About the Paulists 92
Addiction and Recovery: Review of Recent Books ..... Robert M. Hamma 179
Adult Children of Alcoholics: A Profile ..... Rea McDonnell, S.S.N.D. 170
Alcoholic Recovery: A Paradigm of Redemption ..... Father Jim 187
Alcoholism: What You See and What You Don't ..... Fr. Joseph Martin 148
Answering for Faith (Book Review) ..... Paul F. Knitter 231
Aquarian Spirituality ..... William Dinges 137
Art and Prudence (Book Review) ..... Gerald A. McCool, S.J. 277
Bird (A Movie Review) ..... Doug Fisher 46
Blues: A Secular Spiritual, The ..... James H.Cone 22
Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church in Dialogue, The ..... John F. Long, S.J. 211
Catholic Moment, The (Book Review) ..... Bernard J. Campbell, C.S.P. 91
Christian Theology: An Eschatological Approach, Vol. II (Book Review) ..... Bro. Jeffrey Gros,F.S.C. 230
Co-Dependence: Addicted to a Relationship ..... Rachel Callahan, C.S.C. 164
Co-Dependence: Misunderstood—Mistreated (Book Review) ..... Ann Maureen Gallagher, I.H.M. 182
Co-Dependent No More (Book Review) ..... Ann Maureen Gallagher, I.H.M. 182
Creation and the Persistence of Evil (Book Review) ..... Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P. 184
Detachment . . . With Love 169
Dialogue Between the Church and the Contemporary Artist, The ..... Terrence E. Dempsey, S.J. 249
Do You Still Dance? ..... Regis A. Duffy, O.F.M. 244
Exploring the Trends in Musical Liturgy ..... Virgil C. Funk 32
Father Hecker's Last Book ..... Philip Gleason 70
Future of Catholic Leadership (Book Review) ..... John A. Coleman, S.J. 36
Getting Back to the Center ..... Steven Halpern 125
Growing Up and Growing Whole Together ..... Marsha Sinetar 106
Growth of Ecumenical Relations Between Catholics and Orthodox Christians, The ..... John Borelli 225
Habits of Hecker's Heart, The ..... John Farina 81

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Alcoholism: What You See and What You Don't ..... Fr. Joseph Martin 148
Answering for Faith (Book Review) ..... Paul F. Knitter 231
Aquarian Spirituality ..... William Dinges 137
Art and Prudence (Book Review) ..... Gerald A. McCool, S.J. 277
Bird (A Movie Review) ..... Doug Fisher 46
Blues: A Secular Spiritual, The ..... James H.Cone 22
Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church in Dialogue, The ..... John F. Long, S.J. 211
Catholic Moment, The (Book Review) ..... Bernard J. Campbell, C.S.P. 91
Christian Theology: An Eschatological Approach, Vol. II (Book Review) ..... Bro. Jeffrey Gros,F.S.C. 230
Co-Dependence: Addicted to a Relationship ..... Rachel Callahan, C.S.C. 164
Co-Dependence: Misunderstood—Mistreated (Book Review) ..... Ann Maureen Gallagher, I.H.M. 182
Co-Dependent No More (Book Review) ..... Ann Maureen Gallagher, I.H.M. 182
Creation and the Persistence of Evil (Book Review) ..... Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P. 184
Detachment . . . With Love 169
Dialogue Between the Church and the Contemporary Artist, The ..... Terrence E. Dempsey, S.J. 249
Do You Still Dance? ..... Regis A. Duffy, O.F.M. 244
Exploring the Trends in Musical Liturgy ..... Virgil C. Funk 32
Father Hecker's Last Book ..... Philip Gleason 70
Future of Catholic Leadership (Book Review) ..... John A. Coleman, S.J. 36
Getting Back to the Center ..... Steven Halpern 125
Growing Up and Growing Whole Together ..... Marsha Sinetar 106
Growth of Ecumenical Relations Between Catholics and Orthodox Christians, The ..... John Borelli 225
Habits of Hecker's Heart, The ..... John Farina 81

Hecker and the Future ..... Joseph V. Gallagher, C.S.P. 84
Hecker's Hope of Converting America ..... Robert E. Moran, C.S.P. 76
Hecker: The Catholic Evangelical ..... David O'Brien 65
Hecker: The Need for a Reassessment ..... Jon L. Wakelyn 74
Homing Spirit, The (Book Review) ..... Robert E. Lauder 133
Hunting for Spiritual Gurus ..... David Toolan, S.J. 117
Illuminating Icon, The (Book Review) ..... Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P. 232
Invitation ..... Mef Hardin 136
Isaiah and His Interpreters (Book Review) ..... John G. Gammie 277
I Saw a Young Father ..... William Hart McNichols 280
Jesus on Broadway ..... Harold Buckley 17
Keepers of the Signs: Two Fables ..... John Aurelio 267
Lament for Donald Doyle ..... B. E. Stock 178
Last Transcendentalist, The ..... Mary E. Lyons 60
Light from Light (Book Review) ..... Keith J. Egan 278
Limits of the Papacy, The (Book Review) ..... Francis A. Sullivan, S.J. 37
Living in the Presence (Book Review) ..... Joseph A. Grassi 91
Many Faces of Alcoholism, The ..... Sharon, Jerry, Leslie 174
Marriage is Covenant, Family is Church ..... Michael G. Lawler 272
Message from a Recovering Alcoholic to Non-Alcoholics, A 189
Milestones in the Life of Isaac Hecker 56
Ministry: A Theological, Pastoral Handbook (Book Review) .. Michael G. Lawler 186
Music as an Approach to God ..... Richard Viladesau 4
New Age in the New World, The ..... Robert S. Ellwood 112
New Age Music and Spirituality ..... Louis M. Savary 122
New Catholics, The (Book Review) ..... Donald Brophy 89
Newest New Age, The ..... Kenneth Paul Kramer 100
Reading Corinthians (Book Review) ..... Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J. 276
Rediscovering Isaac Hecker ..... Paul Robichaud, C.S.P. 52
Reforming Fundamentalism (Book Review) ..... Bro. Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C. 136
Reshaping of Catholicism, The (Book Review) ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 90
Revelation and Response: What the New Age Can Teach Us ..... Clarence Thomson 129
Risen Sons: Flannery O'Connor's Vision of History (Book Review) ..... Patrick W. Carey 183
Rites of Passage for Children in the 1990s ..... Kenneth Guentert 281
Roman Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue in the United States ..... Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B. 234
Romanian Orthodox Church, The ..... Ronald G. Roberson, C.S.P. 220
Russian Orthodox Mission to America, The, 1794–1868 ..... Archpriest Michael J. Oleksa 205
Sacraments of Life: Life of the Sacraments (Book Review) ..... Gertrud Mueller Nelson 35
Sacred Music: Our Musical Prayer ..... Charles J. Matonti 28
Santeria: An African Religion in America (Book Review) ..... Juan J. Sosa 134
Schubert Treasure, The ..... Frank Ruppert 43
Search for the Spiritual in Twentieth Century Music, The ..... Michael Driscoll 10
Some Basic Facts About Alcoholism 163
Spirit of Russian Orthodoxy, The ..... Vladimir Berzonsky 201
Spirituality of Rock, The ..... Bill Ayres 39
Taking History Into Our Own Hands ..... Bernard J. Lee, S.M. 262
Theological Sharing with the Eastern Churches ..... Michael A. Fahey, S.J. 196
Transforming Grace (Book Review) ..... Joann Wolski Conn 185
Value and Vulnerability of Tradition, The ..... Beatrice de Bary 216
W.A. Visser't Hooft, MEMOIRS (Book Review) ..... Daniel F. Martensen 230
Wheat That Springeth Green (Book Review) ..... George Durant 279
When Behavior and Belief Don't Fit ..... Anthony J. Gittins, C.S.Sp. 258
When The Alcoholic Is A Woman ..... LeClair Bissell, M.D. 154
"You Gotta Have Hope" ..... Robert F. Stuckey, M.D. 158

Authors

John Aurelio 267
Bill Ayres 39
Vladimir Berzonsky 201
LeClair Bissell, M.D. 154
Lawrence Boadt, C.S.P. 184, 232
John Borelli 225
Donald Brophy 89
Harold Buckley 17
Rachel Callahan, C.S.C. 164
Bernard J. Campbell, C.S.P. 91
Patrick W. Carey 183
John A. Coleman, S.J. 36
James H. Cone 22
Joann Wolski Conn 185
Lawrence S. Cunningham 90
Leslie D. 174
Beatrice de Bary 216
Terrence E. Dempsey, S.J. 249
William D. Dinges 137
Michael Driscoll 10
Regis A. Duffy, O.F.M. 244
George Durant 279
Sharon E. 174
Keith J. Egan 278
Robert S. Ellwood 112
Michael A. Fahey, S.J. 196
John Farina 81
Doug Fisher 46
Virgil C. Funk 32
Ann Maureen Gallagher, I.H.M. 182
Joseph V. Gallagher, C.S.P. 84
John G. Gammie 247
Anthony J. Gittins, C.S.Sp. 258
Philip Gleason 70
Joseph A. Grassi 91
Brother Jeffrey Gros, F.S.C. 136, 230
Kenneth Guentert 281
Steven Halpern 125
Robert M. Hamma 179
Mef Hardin 136
Father Jim 187
Paul F. Knitter 231
Kenneth Paul Kramer 100
Robert E. Lauder 133
Michael G. Lawler 186, 272
Bernard J. Lee, S.M. 262
John F. Long, S.J. 211
Mary E. Lyons 60
Daniel F. Martensen 230
Father Joseph Martin 148
Charles J. Matonti 28
Gerald A. McCool, S.J. 277
Rea McDonnell, S.S.N.D. 170
William Hart McNichols 280
Robert E. Moran 76
Gertrud Mueller Nelson 35
Jerry O 174
David O'Brien 65
Rev. Michael J. Oleksa 205
Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J. 276
Ronald G. Roberson, C.S.P. 220
Paul Robichaud, C.S.P. 52
Frank Ruppert 43
Louis M. Savary 122
Marsha Sinetar 106
Juan J. Sosa 134
B. E. Stock 178
Robert F. Stuckey, M.D. 158
Francis A. Sullivan, S.J. 37
Clarence Thomson 129
David Toolan, S.J. 117
Richard Viladesau 4
Jon L. Wakelyn 74
Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B. 234